

REMARKS

Applicants have canceled Claim 2 and incorporated subject matter thereof into Claims 1 and

3. Claim 4 has been cancelled and the issues involved narrowed.

Claim 1, as amended, is to a dial plate for use in an instrument panel of a vehicle, that has a segment display area including indexes, comprising laminated patterns of light emitting elements. The laminated patterns are formed on a substrate of the dial plate by laminating electroluminescent materials through printing, and have a specific design corresponding to external data. A wiring pattern for supplying electric power to the light emitting elements is formed on the substrate as a part of the laminated patterns through printing.

Claim 3, as amended, is to a method for producing a dial plate for use in an instrument panel of a vehicle that has a segment display area including indexes, having the steps of receiving external data, forming a wiring pattern for supplying electric power to the light emitting elements on the substrate through printing and forming laminated patterns on a substrate of the dial plate by laminating electroluminescent materials through printing,. The laminated patterns have a specific design corresponding to the external data. Such a dial plate and method are not taught or suggested in the prior art.

Original Claims 1 and 3 were rejected as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) by Macher (U.S. 6,641,276). Reconsideration and removal of the rejection of the claims as now amended are respectfully requested in view of the present amendments to the claims and the following remarks.

The Office Action alleges that Macher teaches a dial plate for use in an instrument panel of a vehicle, that has laminated patterns of light emitting elements 2 formed on a substrate 4 by laminating electroluminescent materials though printing and having a specific design corresponding to external data. It also alleges that Macher teaches a wiring pattern for supplying electric power to the light emitting elements as part of the laminated pattern and that Macher also teaches the present method.

The Macher reference is to a lighting device which includes an electroluminescent layer assembly. The language referred to in the Office Action (Col. 1, lines 3-5) refers to “a lighting device which is arranged on motor vehicles and/or in interiors of motor vehicles.” The reference discusses lighting devices such as general compartment lighting, ambient lighting, vanity mirror lighting, boot lighting, ashtray lighting and lights in the exterior region of the door. Nowhere is there any teaching or suggestion of a dial plate for use in an instrument panel of a vehicle or method as called for in the present Claims 1 and 3.

There is no teaching or suggestion in Macher as to the process for forming patterns of wiring and light-emitting elements. Macher also fails to teach or suggest how to form a segment display area that includes indexes, as called for in the dial plate of Claim 1 and the method of Claim 3.

In view of the present amendments to the claims and the above remarks, Claims 1 and 3 are believed to be patentable over the prior art and early action towards allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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